RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 P.M.

TUESDAY, JULY 7TH, 2026

City Council Chambers

675 Wildwood Avenue, Rio Dell

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council was called to order at approximately 6:00 PM by Mayor Garnes.

B. ROLL CALL

Present:

- Mayor Garnes
- Mayor Pro Tem Carter
- Council Member Orr
- Council Member Wilson
- Council Member Woodall

Staff Present:

- City Manager Kyle Knopp
- Finance Director Travis Sanborn
- Wastewater Superintendent Moore
- RDPD Chief Phinney
- Community Service Officer Clark
- Community Service Officer Wolfe
- City Clerk Jessica Hill
- Sr. Fiscal Assistant Rosa Maciel

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Council.

D. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

No ceremonial matters were presented.

E. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Garnes opened the public presentations portion of the meeting. No public comments were received. Mayor Garnes closed public presentations.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

The following items were on the Consent Calendar:

- 2026/0707.01 – Approve Minutes of the June 16th, 2026, Regular Meeting
- 2026/0707.02 – Regional Surface Transportation Program Claim for Fiscal Year 2025-26

No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

ACTION: Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Carter, seconded by Council Member Woodall, to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried 5–0.

G. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

H. REPORTS / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

1. 2026/0707.03 – City Manager/Staff Update (RECEIVE & FILE)

City Manager Knopp: Reported that the Animal Care and Control Ad Hoc Committee has been meeting to discuss kenneling options, including potential sites within the City, and that a related agenda item is scheduled for the July 21st Council meeting. He also announced a police-versus-fire softball game fundraiser on Friday, July 10th, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Scotia Fireman's Park, with first pitch at 6 p.m., encouraging the community to attend in support of local first responders.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked about the four dogs recently transported to police department kennels, and whether they were reunited with their owners. Chief Phinney confirmed that all four animals were returned to their owners, noting that for most of the animals reclaiming took an extended time, in one case nearly a week, due to an animal hearing and associated fees that had to be resolved.

Council Member Orr and Council Member Wilson had no questions for staff. No questions were raised by the public.

Prior to moving to Reports/Staff Communications, the City Manager requested Council consideration of two urgency items not listed on the agenda: a letter of support related to Amtrak Thruway bus service in Humboldt County, and acceptance of a California Highway Patrol Cannabis Tax Fund Grant Program award. The City Manager advised that both items arose after the agenda was posted and required a four-fifths vote of the Council to be added to the agenda.

ACTION: Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter to add the two urgency items to the agenda, seconded by Council Member Woodall. Motion carried 5–0.

I. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS / STUDY SESSIONS

1. 2026/0707.04 – Annual Adjustment to Solid Waste Franchise Agreement Held by Recology Eel River (DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

City Manager Knopp introduced the item as the annual rate update under the franchise agreement, noting the agreement was originally negotiated with Eel River Disposal and later assumed by Recology, and that the current agreement expires at the end of

December 2026, with staff continuing to negotiate a successor agreement in coordination with regional agency partners.

Frank Nelson of Recology Eel River addressed the Council. He reported on improvements made by Recology's 107 employee-owners since the retirement of former General Manager Linda Wise, including a reduction in average call center response time to under 40 seconds and a consistent customer satisfaction rating of 4.8–4.9 out of 5. He reported a service failure rate of less than 1% across approximately 60,000 unique services provided. He explained that this year's rate increase was driven primarily by the recycling processing component, due to the labor-intensive nature of hand-sorted recycling at Recology's Samoa facility, weak market values for recycled commodities, and a decline in CRV-eligible material collected curbside. He noted Recology reduced processing labor by approximately 3,000 man-hours this year to help offset costs. He stated the weighted average rate increase was just above 4%, and that a typical 32-gallon residential customer in Rio Dell would see an increase of approximately $1.90 to $1.97 per month.

Councilmember Wilson thanked Recology for holding rate increases down despite rising costs generally, and commented that the increase compared favorably to other cost increases residents are experiencing.

No members of the public wished to comment on this item.

ACTION: Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter to approve the proposed rate adjustment with Recology Eel River, seconded by Council Member Woodall. Motion carried 5–0.

2. 2026/0707.05 – Replacement of Belt Filter Press Cake Conveyance Components and Associated Budget Amendment (ACTION)

Wastewater Superintendent Marshall Moore presented the item, explaining that the belt filter press's ribbon screw has developed a bend that is damaging the press liner, requiring significant recurring maintenance approximately every four months, including removal of the motor and driveshaft to access the screw. Following consultation with AeroMod, the original equipment manufacturer, staff recommended replacing the ribbon screw conveyance with a cake pump system at an estimated cost of approximately $54,000, which would eliminate the recurring liner wear. He noted the alternative of purchasing a replacement ribbon screw, at an estimated cost of approximately $30,000, would not eliminate the underlying wear issue.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked for clarification on which piece of equipment was being discussed. Superintendent Moore clarified that the component is the conveyance step immediately before the biosolids dryer, where material from the belt filter press drops into a trough and hopper before being pumped into the dryer.

No members of the public wished to comment on this item.

ACTION: Motion made by Council Member Orr to approve the purchase of the AeroMod cake pump system, adopt Resolution No. 1674-2026 amending the FY 2026-27 budget to appropriate $54,035, and find AeroMod to be a sole source vendor under RDMC 3.30.070 as the original equipment manufacturer, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carter. Motion carried 5–0.

3. Acceptance of California Highway Patrol Cannabis Tax Fund Grant Program Award (Added Item – ACTION) (Staff Report and/or Supportive Documents attached at the end of these transcribed minutes)

Police Chief Josh Phinney presented the item, reminding the Council that on January 20th it had approved Resolution No. 1658-2026 authorizing submission of a grant application to the California Highway Patrol Cannabis Tax Fund for salaries, benefits, training, equipment, and public education related to enforcement of impaired driving, including cannabis-impaired driving. Eligible uses include officer overtime for enforcement, Drug Evaluation and Classification Program training such as Drug Recognition Expert courses, equipment such as a roadside substance-identification device, and public education. The City had originally requested $160,000 of the $500,000 cap available to the City and was awarded $108,178.75 for the upcoming fiscal year. Chief Phinney apologized that the item did not make the printed agenda, explaining that notification of the award was received July 3rd with a 10-day acceptance window, and requested Council adopt Resolution No. 1676-2026 accepting the grant.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter congratulated the Police Department and noted there is no local match required. Councilmember Wilson asked whether the State had established a legal impairment threshold for cannabis, similar to the 0.08 blood alcohol standard. Chief Phinney explained that a presumptive roadside test can now detect the presence of cannabis, but the State has not established a numeric legal threshold; enforcement instead relies on the presence of a drug combined with an officer's observation of impairment through field sobriety testing.

No members of the public wished to comment on this item.

ACTION: Motion made by Council Member Orr to adopt Resolution No. 1676-2026, accepting the California Highway Patrol Cannabis Tax Fund Grant Program award, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carter. Motion carried 5–0.

4. Letter Related to Amtrak Bus Service in Humboldt County (Added Item – ACTION) (Staff Report and/or Supportive Documents attached at the end of these transcribed minutes)

Mayor Garnes, who serves on the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) Board, explained that Amtrak is deciding whether to continue Thruway bus connector service in Humboldt

County, and that HTA is asking member jurisdictions to submit letters of support for continued service given the importance and expense of regional transportation options out of Humboldt County. City Manager Knopp noted that the letter language was provided by HTA as a form letter for all supporting jurisdictions.

No members of the public wished to comment on this item.

ACTION: Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter to authorize the Mayor to sign the attached letter of support, seconded by Council Member Woodall. Motion carried 5–0.

J. SPECIAL CALL ITEMS / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

No special call items, community affairs, or public hearings were presented.

K. ORDINANCES / SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 2026/0707.06 – Public Hearing to Confirm Delinquent Sewer Charges for Placement on the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Property Tax Roll (ACTION)

Finance Director Travis Sanborn presented the item, explaining that this is an annual public hearing conducted under Rio Dell Municipal Code Sections 13.10.242 through 13.10.246 and California Health and Safety Code Sections 5473 through 5473.7, which allow the City to collect delinquent sewer charges through the county property tax roll when other collection methods have been unsuccessful. He noted that a written report of affected parcels had been prepared and filed, that affected property owners were mailed written notice of the delinquency and this hearing, and that any account paid in full on or before August 6, 2026 would be removed from the report before submission to the County. He recommended the Council open the public hearing, receive testimony, close the hearing, and adopt Resolution No. 1675-2026 confirming the report and directing the Humboldt County Auditor-Controller to place the charges on the FY 2026-27 secured property tax roll.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing. Al Petrovich addressed the Council, stating that he had not received adequate time to prepare a response to the notice dated July 1, 2026, and requested that consideration of his parcel be delayed to the next Council meeting so that he could present a more complete argument regarding why he believes the charge should not apply to his property.

In response to Council questions, City Manager Knopp and Finance Director Sanborn clarified that the Council could adopt the resolution as presented for all listed parcels, with affected owners retaining the ability to pay in full by August 6, 2026 to avoid placement on the tax roll, or the Council could remove a specific parcel from the resolution and address it separately at a future meeting. Staff noted that a decision not to adopt the resolution would prevent any of the listed delinquent charges from being submitted to the County.

Following discussion, the Council determined to adopt the resolution as presented, including Mr. Petrovich's parcel, and to separately agendize his parcel at the July 21st meeting so that he may present his argument in full, with the Council retaining the ability at that time to modify, waive, or otherwise address the charge.

Hearing no further public comment, Mayor Garnes closed the public hearing.

ACTION: Motion made by Council Member Orr to adopt Resolution No. 1675-2026, confirming the report of delinquent sewer service charges and directing the Humboldt County Auditor-Controller to place the charges on the fiscal year 2026-27 secured property tax roll, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carter. Motion carried 4–1, Council Member Wilson voting Nay.

The City Manager was directed to place the parcel associated with Mr. Petrovich's account on the July 21st agenda so the Council may hear his argument and determine whether to modify the charge.

2. 2026/0707.07 – Public Hearing on the Cost Recovery for the Abatement of 185 Douglas St. (ACTION)

Community Service Officer Mary Clark presented the item, reporting that the abatement at 185 Douglas Street occurred on March 4, 2026, during which two 40-yard dumpsters of solid waste and multiple junk vehicles were removed from the property. The City's cost for the abatement was determined to be $3,391.06. The estate of the property owner was notified of the cost recovery assessment and payment deadline of April 10, 2026, and no payment or payment plan has been established.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing. No members of the public wished to comment, and no hands were raised or emails received. Mayor Garnes closed the public hearing.

ACTION: Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter to approve the Findings and Order Confirming Account and Assessment for the abatement of 185 Douglas Street, seconded by Council Member Woodall. Motion carried 5–0.

3. 2026/0707.08 – Public Hearing on the Cost Recovery for the Abatement of 483 Fourth Ave. (ACTION)

Community Service Officer Mary Clark presented the item, reporting that the abatement at 483 Fourth Avenue occurred on February 10, 2026, during which one 30-yard dumpster of solid waste was filled and two junk vehicles were removed from the property. The City's cost for the abatement was determined to be $2,810.84.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing. No members of the public wished to comment. Mayor Garnes closed the public hearing.

ACTION: Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter to approve the Findings and Order Confirming Account and Assessment for the abatement of 483 Fourth Avenue, seconded by Council Member Woodall. Motion carried 5–0.

4. 2026/0707.09 – Public Hearing on the Cost Recovery for the Abatement of 520 First Ave. (ACTION)

Community Service Officer Mary Clark presented the item, reporting that the abatement at 520 First Avenue occurred on January 12th and 13th, 2026, during which three 40-yard dumpsters of solid waste along with multiple junk vehicles and parts were removed from the property. Due to the condition of the residence, Pacific Gas and Electric responded to disconnect services, and workers with Wendt Construction assisted in securing the entrances to the residence. The City's cost for the abatement was determined to be $10,689.00.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing. No members of the public wished to comment. Mayor Garnes closed the public hearing.

ACTION: Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter to approve the Findings and Order Confirming Account and Assessment for the abatement of 520 First Avenue. Motion carried 5–0.

5. 2026/0707.10 – Public Hearing on the Cost Recovery for the Abatement of 337 Second Ave. (ACTION)

Community Service Officer Libbi Wolfe presented the item, reporting that the abatement at 337 Second Avenue occurred on January 9, 2026, during which two 40-yard dumpsters of solid waste and vegetation were removed from the property. The City's cost for the abatement was determined to be $4,087.83.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing. No members of the public wished to comment. Mayor Garnes closed the public hearing.

ACTION: Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter to approve the Findings and Order Confirming Account and Assessment for the abatement of 337 Second Avenue. Motion carried 5–0.

L. COUNCIL REPORTS / COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor Pro Tem Carter:

- The Chamber of Commerce meeting has moved to Tuesday, July 14th at 6:00 p.m.; location to be confirmed.

- The school board meets July 14th at 6:30 p.m. at the school; the Fire District Board of Directors meets July 15th at 5:30 p.m. at the fire hall.
- June Community Resource Center statistics: commodity distribution served 350 people; emergency food was provided to 198 people; housing assistance was provided to 4 people; career assistance was provided to 26 people; laundry vouchers were provided to 30 people; and spay/neuter vouchers were provided to 8 people.
- An emergency food preparation workshop presented by the UC Cooperative Extension will be held Tuesday, July 14th from 4 to 6 p.m., along with a reduce-reuse-recycle sculpture class led by Elizabeth Warren.
- The Resource Center's first perimenopause support group will be held Wednesday, July 8th from 4 to 5 p.m.
- Mayor Pro Tem Carter requested that an update on the spay/neuter voucher program and its future be added to a future agenda, either within the Animal Care and Control ad hoc item or as a separate item. Council consensus was to place it as a separate agenda item.

Council Member Orr:

Nothing to report.

Council Member Wilson:

- Reported on the most recent RCEA meeting. RCEA's rates are currently about half a percent below PG&E's, and due to declining revenue the agency is considering a rate increase; a proposal to raise rates 12.5% above PG&E parity (approximately $5 per month) was scaled back by motion to a 10% cap, with an official vote expected at RCEA's next meeting, and any increase effective September 2026. Councilmember Wilson noted that RCEA member agencies are not required to unanimously agree with rate actions, and stated he would vote in accordance with the Council's direction. He further explained that RCEA reinvests its approximately $10 million in annual margin locally, supporting roughly $6 million in wages for around 45 local employees as well as community programs such as e-bike and solar incentives, money that would otherwise flow to PG&E shareholders.

Council Member Woodall:

- Reported that the community garden is progressing well, with an opening planned to coincide with Wildwood Days, and thanked the Conservation Corps for its continued involvement. She also noted that several downtown buildings have been improved recently, including the liquor store and a local bank building, and commented positively on the overall improvement of businesses along Main Street.

Mayor Garnes:

- Noted the Amtrak/HTA letter as a significant item from the meeting.

M. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion to adjourn made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter, seconded by Mayor Garnes.
Motion carried 5–0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:02PM. The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

APPROVED:

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Debra L. Garnes, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Jessica Hill, City Clerk